

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-1

NEW YORK TIMES
1 AUGUST 1980

Billy Carter Denies Having Copies Of Secret Cables Relating to Libya

By WENDELL RAWLS Jr.

Special to The New York Times

AMERICUS, Ga., July 31 — Billy Carter insisted today that he did not possess copies of State Department cables relating to his involvement with the Government of Libya and that his brother, President Carter, had not shown such documents to him.

"I have State Department copies of nothing," he said in a five-minute encounter with reporters outside the Best Western Motel here, where he often goes for breakfast and extended conversation over coffee. "Jimmy has not shown me anything."

The brief question-and-answer session in Americus today followed a two-hour conversation in the motel dining room under guidelines establishing that reporters could join him in the absence of television cameras but that "nothing of substance" could be asked.

Conflict With Lisker Account

Mr. Carter's answers to questions about the cables conflicted with accounts given by Joel Lisker, a Justice Department investigator, who said yesterday that Mr. Carter indicated that he had access to such cables in an interview Mr. Lisker had with him on Jan. 16, 1980.

Mr. Lisker is chief of the Justice Department's foreign agents registration unit and was involved in a department inquiry into whether Billy Carter was acting as an agent for the Government of Libya. Mr. Carter registered as an agent on July 14. As is customary in such cases when the agent agrees to register, criminal charges for previously failing to do so were not filed.

In Washington, Congressional committees got Justice Department documents saying that Billy Carter told the department in January that he had had discussions about the sale of machine guns to Libya with an arms merchant. However, according to the documents, Mr. Carter

later denied having had such discussions or having told the investigators that he had. [Page A11.]

Mr. Lisker gave this account to The New York Times of his interview with Mr. Carter, which took place in Georgia: Mr. Lisker said that he had some nonclassified diplomatic cables on the table before him and that Mr. Carter said: "I see you've got the C.I.A. cables. I've got those."

Mr. Lisker said that he asked where Mr. Carter got the cables and that Mr. Carter replied, "Jimmy gave them to me."

Mr. Lisker said that he did not go to Mr. Carter's home in Buena Vista, Ga., to determine whether he actually had the cables because that seemed to be outside the focus of the investigation.

A White House statement said yesterday that the President had discussed with his brother some cables from the United States Embassy in Tripoli stating that Billy Carter's September 1978 trip to Libya had gone well from the embassy's point of view. The statement said that President Carter did not recall whether he had seen the texts himself or been told about them, and that he did not recall showing or giving the texts to his brother.

The cables in question were reportedly marked "confidential" or "limited official use," the two lowest grades of classification. The State Department says that while such cables are not supposed to be given to the general public, they are in practice routinely declassified and made available and that it is not unusual for officials to clip off the security designations on nonsensitive cables and give them to reporters or businessmen, particularly if it involves them directly.

Today the White House released the texts of seven previously classified State Department cables relating to Billy Carter's 1978 trip. They were released 14 months ago to the columnist Jack Anderson. Jody Powell, the White House spokesman, said that the cables were so

innocuous that their disclosure couldn't amount to "a hill of beans."

Mr. Lisker also said in his account of his interview with Billy Carter that Billy said he called the White House last year to inquire about C-130 military transport planes sold to Libya but not released, and that Mr. Carter also said that he had spoken to Phillip J. Wise, the President's appointments secretary. Mr. Lisker went on to say that he now believed the call to have been made by Henry Randolph Coleman, a close associate of Billy Carter.

Billy Carter said today that, although he had telephoned Mr. Wise "probably 400 times in three years, because I know Phil better than anybody in the White House," he had had "no conversations with Phil about the C-130" airplanes that the United States is withholding from the Libyans.

The White House, in what it described as a full statement of White House dealings with Billy Carter on Libya, issued July 22, made no mention of the airplanes.

Billy Carter Disputes Lisker

Mr. Lisker also said that Billy Carter had lied in the Jan. 16 interrogation by saying that he had received no money from the Libyans when a bank deposit slip showed that \$20,000 was placed in Mr. Carter's bank account on Dec. 31. That deposit represented the first part of an eventual \$220,000 that Billy Carter received from the Libyans, Mr. Lisker said.

However, Mr. Carter said that "Lisker's got everything out of sequence" in the matter of the bank deposits of the \$220,000, which Mr. Carter says was a loan from the Libyan Government.

"Even the bank is wrong," Mr. Carter said today.

Told that Mr. Lisker had said that he seemed to have lied under Government questioning, Billy Carter ended his encounter with reporters by responding: "Lisker's full of —."